

REMARKS

Applicant appreciates the time taken by the Examiner to review Applicant's present application. This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Official Action mailed December 28, 2006. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and favorable action in this case.

Rejections

Claims 1-3, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12-14 and 19-23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,731,644 ("Epps") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,128,666 ("Muller"), or Epps in view of Muller in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,317,415 ("Darnell"). Claims 1-3, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12-14, and 19-23 are cancelled.

Claim Objections

Claims 4, 5, 8, 11, and 15-18 were objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants amend Claims 4, 8, 11, 15 and 18 in response to the Examiner's objections. No new matter is added.

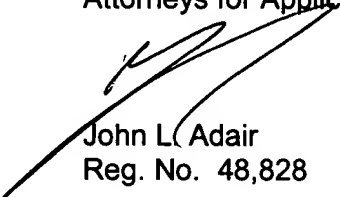
CONCLUSION

Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw his objections of Claims 4, 5, 8, 11 and 15-18. Applicant has now made an earnest attempt to place this case in condition for allowance. Other than as explicitly set forth above, this reply does not include an acquiescence to statements, assertions, assumptions, conclusions, or any combination thereof in the Office Action. For the foregoing reasons and for other reasons clearly apparent, Applicant respectfully requests full allowance of the pending claims. The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number listed below for prompt action in the event any issues remain.

The Director of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office is hereby authorized to charge any fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 50-3183 of Sprinkle IP Law Group.

Respectfully submitted,

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